

he were ful wys; for soothly, he ne sholde nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to synne, but yeven his body and al his herte to the service of Jhesu Crist, & therof doon hym hommage. for soothly, oure sweete Lord Jhesu Crist hath spared us so debonairly in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitee of mannes soule, a sory song we myghten alle synge.

Explicit prima pars Penitentie; et sequitur secunda pars eiusdem.

THE seconde partie of penitence is confessioun, that is signe of contricioun. Now shul ye understonde what is confessioun, and whether it oghtenedes be doon or noon, and whiche thynges been covenable to verrey confessioun. First shaltow understonde that confessioun is verrey shewynge of synnes to the preest; this is to seyn, Verrey, for he moste confessen hym of alle the condiciouns that bilongen to his synne, as ferforth as he kan. Al moot be seyd, and nothyng excused, ne hyd, ne for-wrapped, and noght ayaunte him of his goode werkes. And fortherover, it is neces-sarie to understonde whennes that synnes spryngen, and how they encreessen, and whiche they been. Of the spryngynge of synnes seith Seint Paul in this wise: that Right as by a man synne entred first into this world, and thurgh that synne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred into alle men that synned. And this man was Adam, by whom synne entred into this world whan he brak the comaundement of God. And therefore, he that first was so myghty that he sholde nat have dyed, bicam swich oon that he moste nedes dye, whether he wolde or noon; and al his progenye in this world that in thilke man synned.

LOOKIE, that in thestaat of inno-cence, whan Adam and Eve naked weren in Parady, and nothyng ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was moost wily of alle othere beestes that God hadde maked, seyde to the womman: Why comaunded God to yow, yesholde nat eten of every tree in Parady? The womman answerde: Of the fruyt, quod she, of the trees in Parady we feden us, but soothly, of the fruyt of the tree that is in the myddel of Parady, God forbad us for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest peraventure we sholde dyen. The serpent seyde to the womman: Nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth; for sothe, God woot, that what day that ye eten ther-of, youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowynge good and harm.

THE womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feedynge, and fair to the eyen, and delitable to the sighte; and yaf to hire housbonde, and he eet it; and anon the eyen of hem bothe openeden. And whan that they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of fige/leves amare of breches, to hiden hire membres. Theremay ye seen that deedly synne hath first sug-by the naddre; and afterward, the delit of the flesh, as sheweth heere by Eve; and sheweth heere by Adam. for trust wel, though so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn the flesh, & the flesh hadde delit in the beautee of the fruyt de-fended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the eryng of the fruyt, yet stood he in thestaat of in-nocence. Of thilke Adam toke we thilke synne original; for of hym fleschly de-scended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt mateere. And whan the soule is put in oure body, right anon is contract original synne; & that, that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence, is after-ward both peyne and synne. And therefore be we alle born sones of wrathe and of dampnacioun perdurable, if it nere bap-tisme that wereceyven, which bynnyethus the culpe; but forsothe, the peyne dwelleth with us, as to temptacioun, which peyne highte concupiscence. Whan it is wrong-fully disposed or ordeyned in man, it mak-eth hym coveite, by coveitise of flesh, fleschly synne, by sighte of his eyen as to erthely thynges, and coveitise of hynesse by pride of herte.

NOW, as for to speken of the firste coveitise, that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawefullche ymaked and by rightful ju-gement of God; I seye, forasmuche as man is nat obeisaunt to God, that is his Lord, therefore is the flesh to hym disobisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norissynge of synne, & occasion of synne. Therefore, al the while that a man hath in hym the peyne of concupiscence, it is im-possible but he be tempted somtime, and moeved in his flesh to synne. And this thyng may nat faille as longe as he lyveth; it may wel wexe fieble & faille, by vertu of bap-tisme & by the grace of God thurgh pen- itence; but fully ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal somtyme be moeved in hym self, but if he were alrefreyded by siknesse, or by malefice of sorcerie, or colde drynkes. for lo, what seith Seint Paul: The flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flesh; they been so contrarie &

so stryven, that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde. The same Seint Paul, after his grete penaunce in water and in lond; in greet peyne, in lond, in famyne, in thurst, in coold, and cloothless, and ones stoned almost to the deeth, yet seyde he: Allas! I, caytyf man, who shal deliver me fro the prison of my caytyf body? And Seint Jerome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, whereas he hadde no compaignye but of wilde beestes, whereas he ne hadde no mete but herbes, & water to his drynke, no no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flesh was blak as an Ethiopien for heete, & ny destroyed for coold, yet seyde he: that The brennyng of lecherie boyled in al his body. Wherefore, I woot wel syker-ly, that they been deceyved that seyn, that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. Wit- nesse on Seint Jame the Apostel, that seith: that Every wight is tempted in his owene concupiscence; that is to seyn, that everich of us hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of the norissynge of synne that is in his body. And therefore seith Seint John the evangelist: If that we seyn that we beth withoute synne, we deceyve us selve, and trouthe is nat in us.

NOW shal ye understonde in what ma- nere that synne wexeth or encreeseth in man. The firste thyng is thilke norissynge of synne, of which I spak bi- fore, thilke fleschly concupiscence. And after that comth the subjeccioun of the devel, this is to seyn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fir of fleschly concupiscence. And after that, a man bi- thyngeth hym whether he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne, if that a man withstonde & weyve the firste entisynge of his flesh and of the feend, thanne is it no synne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feelet he anon a flambe of delit. And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen hym wel, or elles he wol falle anon into consentynge of synne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme & place. And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere: The feend seith, I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestioun, and I wole hente hym by moevynge or stiryng of synne. I wol departe my prise or my praye by delibera- cioun, and my lust shal been accompliced in delit; I wol drawe my sward in consent- ynge: for certes, right as a sward depart- eth a thyng in two peces, right so consent- ynge departeth God fro man: And thanne wol I sleen hym with myn hand in dede of synne; thus seith the feend. For certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is synne accompliced by temptacioun, by

delit, and by consentynge; and thanne is the synne cleped actueel.

FORSO THE, synne is in two man- eres; outhet it is venial, or deedly synne. Soothly, whan man loveth any creature moore than Jhesu Crist oure Creatour, thanne is it deedly synne. And venial synne is it, if man love Jhesu Crist lasse than hym oghte. forsothe, the dede of this venial synne is ful perilous; for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to God moore and moore. And therefore if a man charge hymself with manyes swiche ve- nial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som- tyme discharge hym of hem by shrifte, they mowe ful lightly amenuse in hym al the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and in this wise skippeth venial into deedly synne. for certes, the moore that a man chargeth his soule with venial synnes, the moore is he enclyned to fallen into deedly synne. And therefore, lat us nat be negli- gent to deschargen us of venial synnes; for the proverbe seith: that Manye smale maken a greet. And herke this ensample. A greet wawe of the see comth somtyme with so greet a violence that it drencheth the ship. And the same harm dooth som- tyme the smale drops of water, that en- tren thurgh a litel crevace into the thurrok, and into the botme of the ship, if men be so negligent that they ne discharge hem nat by tyme. And therefore, although ther be a difference bitwix these two causes of drenchynge, algates the ship is dreynt. Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly synne, and of anyouse veniale synnes, whan they multiplie in a man so greetly, that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth, thurgh whiche he synneth venially, is as greet in his herte as the love of God, or moore. And therefore, the love of every thyng that is nat biset in God, ne doon principally for Goddes sake, although that a man love it lasse than God, yet is it venial synne; and deedly synne, whan the love of any thyng weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of God, or moore. Deed- ly synne, as seith Seint Augustyn: Is, whan a man turneth his herte fro God, which that is verrey sovereyn bountee, that may nat chaunge, and yeveth his herte to thyng that may chaunge and flitte. And certes, that is every thyng, save God of hevene. for sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to God with al his herte, unto a creature, certes, as muche as he yeveth of his love to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro God; and therefore dooth he synne. for he that is dettour to God, ne yeldeth nat to God al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of his herte.